

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR UR MO

SUBJECT: FRENCH FEARS OF TROUBLE IN MOROCCO: A
NEW ANGOLA CLOSER TO HOME?

1. CONVERSATIONS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS WITH STAFF OFFICERS WHO WORK FOR TOP FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY OFFICIALS REFLECT A GROWING PREOCCUPATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS WITH THE SPECTER OF ANOTHER ANGOLA CLOSER TO HOME. IN THEIR INVENTORY OF ACTUAL TROUBLE SPOTS WHICH THEY CONSIDER VULNERABLE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF CUBAN OR OTHER SOVIET-SPONSORED FORCES, THE FRENCH ARE WORRIED MOST ABOUT MOROCCO.

2. GOF ANALYSIS IS THAT ALGERIA'S PRESTIGE IN THE THIRD WORLD, LIBYA'S MASSIVE ARMS BUILDUP, KING HASSAN'S FEUDALISTIC IMAGE, AND POLISARIO'S CLAIM TO SELF-DETERMINATION, COMBINE TO GIVE THE SOVIETS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO REPEAT THE ANGOLA EXPERIENCE IN THE SAHARA THROUGH SURROGATE FORCES WHICH WOULD BE DESCRIBED AS ASSISTANCE TO LEGITIMATE INSTITUTIONS. FRENCH HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE YET OF FIRST STEPS IN THIS SCENARIO, BUT ARE COMBING INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM TINDOUF AND OTHER SAHARA LOCATIONS INTENSIVELY FOR TELLTALE SIGNS. INTELLIGENCE

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COMMUNITY REPORTS OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT

HAVING RECENTLY LEFT HAIPHONG BY BOAT FOR ALGERIA ARE NOW CIRCULATING OPENLY IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES.

3. FRANCE, OF COURSE, HAS CLOSE DEFENSE AS WELL AS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LINKS WITH MOROCCO. WHILE THEY SHARED OUR CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA AND JOINED US IN TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF VITAL FRENCH NATIONAL INTEREST. MOROCCO, HOWEVER, IS HIGH IN THE FRENCH NATIONAL INTEREST CATEGORY. IN CONVERSATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT OUR INTERLOCUTORS TALK ABOUT FRANCE HAVING TO TAKE ACTION IF NECESSARY, BUT THESE DECLARATIONS ARE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY THE BIG QUESTION --- WILL THE U.S. ALSO STAND BY ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MOROCCO? IN THIS CONTEXT, THE FRENCH ARE NOW BEGINNING TO ASK THEMSELVES THE QUESTIONS THEY SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED BEFORE THE FALL OF SAIGON.

4. AS I INDICATED ABOVE, THE FRENCH STILL HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT MOROCCO IS NEXT ON THE LIST OF SOVIET ADVENTURES. BUT THEY ARE CLEARLY WORRIED THAT IT MIGHT BE, AND THEIR CONTINGENCY THINKING REVEALS A BIG QUESTION MARK FOR THE USG. NOW THAT OUR COURSES ON MPLA RECOGNITION HAVE DIVERGED YOU MIGHT WISH TO RE-KNIT OUR COMMON INTERESTS BY RECOMMENDING THAT THE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATE WITH GISCARD TO REASSURE HIM ABOUT THE BROADER PROBLEM OF CONTAINMENT AND BY SHARING WITH GISCARD AND SAUVAGNARGUES OUR CONTINGENCY PLANNING ON MOROCCO-ALGERIA.
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